

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TECH, JA
SUBJECT: JAPANESE REACTION TO US ENERGY PROGRAM

FOLLOWING TWO ARTICLES APPEARED MAINICHI DAILY NEWS FRIDAY,
AUGUST 22. THE ONLY ASPECT OF EMPHATIC DISAGREEMENT WHICH
HAS SURFACED SO FAR IS THE NEGATIVE DECISION ON THE CLINCH
RIVER PLANT.

A. QUOTE. CARTER'S ENERGY PROGRAM DRAWS MITI ADMIRATION
TATSUO TANAKA, MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY
THURSDAY PRAISED U.S. PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER'S ENERGY CON-
SERVATION PROGRAM AS "STRONG AND DEFINITE."

2. IN A STATEMENT, TANAKA ALSO EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE
PROGRAM WOULD HAVE FAVORABLE EFFECTS ON THE WORLD'S ENERGY
SUPPLY AND DEMAND.

3. THE STATEMENT SAID JAPAN WOULD ENDEAVOR TO SECURE A STEADY
SUPPLY OF OIL AND STEP UP EFFORTS TO SAVE OIL BY
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PUSHING FURTHER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OFFSUBSTITUTE
ENERGY.

4. MEANWHILE, A TOP ENERGY EXPERT AT MITI SAID THAT
THERE WERE BASICALLY NO MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE
AMERICAN NUCLEAR POLICY AS OUTLINED IN PRESIDENT
CARTER'S CONGRESSIONAL PRESENTATION AND THAT OF JAPAN,

EXCEPT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAST BREEDER REACTORS.

5. HE SAID THAT BOTH JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES ARE PLANNING TO STEP UP NUCLEAR POWER GENERATION, BUT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION IS SEEKING TO DEFER DEVELOPMENT OF FAST BREEDER NUCLEAR REACTOR PROJECTS.

6. QUOTE THERE IS NO NEED TO ENTER THE PLUTONIUM AGE BY LICENSING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FAST BREEDER REACTOR SUCH AS THE PROPOSED DEMONSTRATION PLANT AT CLINCH RIVER, UNQUOTE CARTER WAS QUOTED AS SAYING.

7. THE OFFICIAL STRESSED THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FAST BREEDER REACTOR WAS QUOTE DEFINITELY NECESSARY UNQUOTE FOR JAPAN, HOWEVER.

8. AS FOR THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF JAPAN'S URANIUM ENRICHMENT CAPACITY, THE OFFICIAL SAID THAT HE COULD NOT MAKE ANY COMMENT SINCE THE PROPOSAL WAS MADE WITHIN A PACKAGE WHICH WOULD RESTRAIN THE EXTRACTION AND RECYCLING OF PLUTONIUM--A POLICY TO WHICH JAPAN IS FIRMLY OPPOSED.

9. BUT HE SUPPORTED PRESIDENT CARTER'S PLAN TO SHORTEN THE WAITING PERIOD FOR ISSUING AN APPROVAL OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS.

10. (AT PRESENT IT TAKES ABOUT 10 YEARS BEFORE OFFICIAL APPROVAL IS GIVEN FOR SUCH PROJECT.)

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11. HIGHLY APPRAISING CARTER'S EFFORT FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION, THE MITI OFFICIAL SAID THAT JAPAN WILL LIKEWISE HAVE TO MAKE CONCERTED EFFORTS TO CUT BACK ITS OIL CONSUMPTION.

12. IF THE UNITED STATES OIL CONSERVATION PROGRAM WORKS AS PLANNED, IT IS LIKELY THAT JAPAN WILL EMERGE AS THE WORLD'S LARGEST CONSUMER OF OIL, HE SAID.

13. THE MITI OFFICIAL ALSO POINTED OUT THE NEED TO REMOULD THE OIL GUZZLING HABITS OF JAPANESE INDUSTRIES AND ITS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM. UNQUOTE.

B. REACTIONS TO CARTER'S N-POLICY:
GOV'T UPSET, INDUSTRY CALM

1. THE U.S. DOMESTIC NUCLEAR POLICY PRESIDENT CARTER ANNOUNCED EARLIER THIS MONTH HAS SPARKED MIXED REACTIONS ACROSS THE WORLD. IN JAPAN, THE POWER INDUSTRY APPEARS TO BE SOMEWHAT

RELAXED IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THE HECTIC NUCLEAR EXPERTS AT THE MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY.

2. IN FACT, THE PRESIDENTS OF THE NATION'S NINE POWER FIRMS, IT APPEARED, WERE QUITE CALM AT THEIR MONTHLY REGULAR MEETING WHICH WAS HELD RECENTLY.

3. THEY DID NOT VOICE CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S NONPROLIFERATION POLICY BUT DECIDED TO WAIT AND SEE THE OUTCOME OF THE SECOND ROUND OF WORKING-LEVEL DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON ON JAPAN'S LIGHT WATER REACTOR FUEL RECYCLING PROGRAM.

4. WHY SO RELAXED? PERHAPS IT IS THAT THEY DO NOT SEE MUCH REASON IN PUSHING FORWARD WITH JAPAN'S REPROCESSING PROGRAM SO LONG AS THE U.S. LIVES UP TO ITS PLEDGE TO SUPPLY ENRICHED URANIUM TO JAPAN.
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TM ORIGINALLY THE JAPANESE POWER FIRMS BEGAN R&D ON THE REPROCESSING OF SPENT LIGHT WATER REACTOR FUELS AT THE REQUEST OF THE UNITED STATES. THE UNITED STATES HAD PLEDGED STABLE SUPPLIES OF ENRICHED URANIUM IN PROMOTING THE SALES OF ITS LIGHT WATER REACTORS. BUT THE U.S. FOUND IT NO LONGER POSSIBLE TO MEET THE WORLD DEMAND FOR ENRICHED URANIUM IN THE WAKE OF THE OIL CRISIS IN 1973.

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6. IN THE FACE OF THE ARAB OIL CRUNC#, THE WORLD'S MAJOR NUCLEAR POWERS RUSHED TO CONTRACT FOR AMERICAN ENRICHED URANIUM TYRING TO SECURE A STABLE SUPPLY.

7. THE U.S. THEN ASKED FOR JAPAN'S COOPERATION IN STEPPING UP THE R&D OF EXTRACTING PLUTONIUM FROM SPENT FUELS AND RECYCLING IT INTO LIGHT WATER REACTORS, OR FASTO BREEDER REACTORS.

8. AT U.S. REQUEST, THE POWER REACTOR AND NUCLEAR FUELS DEVELOPMENT CORP., A SEMIGOVERNMENTAL ORGAN TO DEVELOP TECHNOLOGY FOR HARNASSING FISSION ENERGY, CONSTRUCTED A REPROCESSING PLANT IN TOKAI VILLAGE, NORTH OF TOKYO. THE PROCESSING PLANT, WITH A DAILY CAPACITY OF 0.7 TONS IS SCHEDULED TO GO INTO COMMERCIAL OERATION THIS JULY.

9. THE JAPANESE POWER INDUSTRY IS ALSO NEGOTIATING WITH BRITAIN AND FRANCE FOR COMMISSIONING THOSE COUNTRIES TO REPORCESS SPENT NUCLEAR FUELS OVER 10 YEARS' TIME BEGINNING AROUND 1980.

10. THE POWER INDUSTRY HAS FOUND, HOWEVER, THAT THE WORK
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IS MUCH MORE COSTLY THAN THEY HAD FIRST THOUGHT: THE REPROCESSING PLANT, DESPITE ITS SMALL CAPACITY, COST SOME 30 BILLION YEN, AND THE POWER INDUSTRY WILL BE PAYING SOME 600 BILLION YEN FOR COMMISSIONING THE REPROCESSING.

1. IN ADDITION, IT WILL TAKE MANY MORE YEARS BEFORE FAST BREEDER REACTORS AND AN ADVANCED THERMAL REACTOR (ATR), WHICH WILL BURN PLUTONIUM AS FUEL, GO INTO COMMERCIAL OPERATION IN THIS COUNTRY.

12. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, IT IS BELIVED, THE POWER INDUSTRY DECIDED NOT TO MAKE TOO MUCH FUSS ABOUT THE US NON-PROLIFERATION POLICY AND TO FOLLOW THE POLICY AS FAR AS THE US CONTINUES TO SUPPLY ENRICHED URANIUM TO JAPAN.

13. OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY ARE, HOWEVER, EMBITTERED OVER THE FICKLE ATTITUDE OF THE DOMESTIC POWER INDUSTRY. MITI THINKS THE JAPANESE INDUSTRY IS OVERLY DEPENDENT ON THE US AND THAT NOW IS THE TIME TO ATTAIN NUCLEAR INDEPENDENCE.

14. OFFICIALS SAY THAT URANIUM, LIKE OTHER FOSSIL ENERGY SOURCES, WILL DEplete IN ABOUT TEN YEARS UNLESS THE SPENT FUELS ARE RECYCLED AND, FOR THIS REASON, IT IS DEFINITELY NECESSARY TO BURN PLUTONIUM AS FUEL.

15. PLUTONIUM IS PRESENT IN SPENT NUCLEAR FUELS AND IS A SORT OF QUOTE DOMESTICALLY PRODUCED UNQUOTE ENERGY RESOURCE FOR JAPAN, WHICH IS, UNFORMTUNATLEY, NOT BLESSED WITH EITHER URANIUM OR OIL RESOURCES, THEY SAY. UNQUOTE.
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